

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### Mountain Heritage High School's Eco-club

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Yancey County's Cane River was once home to part of a thriving population of endangered Appalachian elktoe mussels. Recently beset with problems, hopefully through careful stewardship it will once again become a vibrant and beautiful river.

The Cane River also runs past Mountain Heritage High School, the only public high school in Yancey Country. This year marks the fourth anniversary, and thus the first full graduating class, of the high school's Eco-Club. Recent years have seen a renaissance of Yancey County residents taking an active role in the conservation of their community, and the high school students have been right there.

They've started a recycling program at the high school. They've been in the field with professionals to learn about the county's natural resources. They've helped younger students learn about their outdoors, and they get out just to have fun on a lake or under the stars by a campfire.

Perhaps a high point of the students' community engagement came at a recent public meeting about a proposed gravel mine on the Cane River, the same river that flows past the high school. During that meeting, Sara, a Mountain Heritage student, stood up and voiced her opposition to the gravel mine. At the end of the meeting, the mine developer declared he had changed his mind, and there would be no mine.

These Mountain Heritage High students have proven themselves leaders and have worked to make a difference in their community.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.